1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

RITUAL AND EVIDENCE

LEGAL CONSEQUENCES OF SORCERY

The occurrence of supernatural sanctions may be legally irrelevant, for sin need not be illegal. But sometimes an act may be both sinful and illegal and the invocation of a supernatural sanction is one way of dealing with a grievance. When the sanction depends on invocation by the aggrieved or by an official, we have one form of resort to law—though it be also, or even exclusively, religious law.

There is a notion current among social scientists that religious tabu precedes legal strictures in the hypothetical time sequence of social development. Law emerges from religion, they say. This is one of those over-generalizations which trap seekers of sequences. Because in our own social history and that of Greece and Rome we can note an early precedence of religion as a source of some law, or because in some primitive societies tabu and supernatural injunction dominate human conduct, does not mean that such circumstances are characteristic of human society in general.[1]

Yet this erroneous notion is commonly accepted as self-evident fact. Harry Elmer Barnes' restatement of Franz Oppenheimer's thesis may be noted as an example. "Primitive punishment is inflicted either to remove the stain of impurity from society or to prevent a supernatural being from taking revenge on the tribe."[2] This is partly true of the punishment of murder among the Cheyennes. It would also be true for the punishment of incest among most natives of Australia. It holds only in very minor part for the Comanches. In none of the incest cases will the reader find a trace of fear of the supernatural expressed. Though religion penetrates the legal complex, law in this society does not reinforce religious beliefs.

Like all Indians, the Comanches were essentially religious. Their religion shows affiliations with characteristic forms of the Plains and in some respects with the Shoshonean peoples of the Great Basin.

It was an exceedingly simple, highly vital religion. The concept of the guardian spirit[3] was its heart and core. Success and excellence in any action

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[1] Mr. A. S. Diamond (*Primitive Law*, London, 1936), has recently attempted to demonstrate the lack of validity of the "law from religion" doctrine by an historical examination of the development of the early legal codes of Asia Minor and Europe in particular. The codes, however, are the terminus, not the beginning of primitive law, a fact which makes his argument spurious as far as legal beginnings may be concerned.

[2] H. E. Barnes, *The Story of Punishment* (New York, 1924), p. 3.

[3] For the cultural significance and generalized nature of the complex see Ruth Benedict, *The Concept of the Guardian Spirit in North America* (Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association, No. 29, 1924), p. 29.

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or trait depended on power given to man by some supernatural being. The supernatural beings were animistic objects of nature—birds—the hawk, the eagle, and humming bird; animals—the bear, the otter, bison, rat, wolf, and others; reptiles and fishes; even insects. All were living spirits who spoke the language of man and who possessed special attributes or powers which they could give to men as medicine. Other spirits were the imaginary environment: a whole fabric created by man's fancy, made real by dogma. These were the dwarf people, who lived in the mountains; the water babies, who lived in swampy places; the dead reincarnated as animals; and the ghosts of men, who were likely to turn up almost anywhere. By association, medicines were usually similar in some respect to notable qualities possessed by the prototype of the respective guardian spirit. Lightning and thunder gave power, too, but the earth and the sun were akin to deities. They were active in the affairs of men, yet above that individualized pity which led spirit-beings to bestow medicine powers on an earthling.

The essence of the religion was found in the relation between an earthling and his guardian spirits. Power came in vision visitations. It was a dream phenomenon, or hallucinatory experience. It sometimes came uninvited. More frequently it was sought.

A vision quest entailed a solitary visit to a mountain, or to the grave of a dead medicine man. Fasting and certain rituals were involved, though no self-torture was used by these people. The watch lasted four days; it might last longer. The Comanche stayed at it until he received his vision, or else abandoned the quest.

Religious practice consisted in first instance of the patterns for obtaining supernatural favor. Behind these were relationships which prevailed between men and their guardian spirits, together with certain notions concerning supernatural forces in general: so those pertaining to Coyote, the trickster, or to the earth and the sun. In almost every instance, it must be emphasized, these relationships and their observance were a matter of *individual* concern. The Comanche did have medicine societies of a sort, but they were limited both in extent and in importance. Dances or ceremonies were few and simple. Most of them were without religious significance. The great exception, the Sun Dance, was a relatively late acquisition from other Plains tribes.[4]

Religion being thus an individual matter save in exceptional cases, the tabus which it enjoined were also limited in importance to the person

[4] R. Linton, *The Comanche Sun Dance* (American Anthropologist, vol. 37, 1938), pp. 420–428.

1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

concerned. Infractions of tabus which endangered the community were foreign to the Comanche mind. Hence any idea that crime and punishment must spring from tabu proves in this instance sterile. It was the holder of the medicine, not the community, who suffered if the strictures of associated tabu were overlooked.

With this, however, we have not slammed the door on the possibility of supernatural admixture in law. Among the Comanches we find it in sorcery.

The Comanches made no basic distinction between a medicine man (shaman) and sorcerer. Medicine was a two-edged sword. It could cut for good or evil. In a tribe where the majority of adults (especially males, but also women) held some medicine, those who were recognized as medicine men were those who possessed at least one *outstanding* thaumaturgic power. To be "evil" was to use one's power to the damage of the well-being of a fellow tribesman. Hence, the sorcerer was tagged "evil medicine man." Correlatively, to be "good" was to use one's powers to advance one's well-being in hunting or war without harm to others of the in-group, or to use the power beneficently for the curing of others in the band or tribe. A shaman could be wholly good; he could be good and evil; he could be almost totally bad. It depended on the path he followed.

One interesting psychological feature of Comanche sorcery was a not unusual compulsion to use medicine powers against some innocent victim without—even contrary to—the conscious desire to do harm on the part of the shaman. Should a dream "tell" a medicine man to cause the illness of another person, it became imperative that it be done. Failure to so function meant death to the shaman; his power turned on him. "No Bed could not help herself," observed She Invites Her Relatives, "The dream came. She *had* to put the curse on the person dreamed of. Else the sickness would come on her."

The sorcerer's curse was done by "throwing" a foreign substance into the body of the victim. It was done in secret. The exception was when sorcerers gathered together to do battle in tournaments of competitive skill. Unless the sorcerer's medicine was unusually powerful, he had to operate in the near vicinity of his victim, for it was difficult to throw the substance far. Feathers were the choicest medium; thorns, cacti, crystals and spiders were among the varied possibilities. Sorcery thus had some tangible vehicle. The projecting power was worked up with songs and prayer such as had been revealed to the sorcerer by the guardian spirit.

Sorcery was aggression. It was violent trespass against the individual's right to life and well-being. Here is the conflict situation. To meet it recognized measures were at hand.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

VII

The Search for Power

RELIGIOUS practice among the Comanches consisted primarily of socially recognized patterns for obtaining supernatural favor. There were patterns for both individual and community ceremonials, but unlike religious practices in our own society, group participation was extremely limited in extent and importance. In almost every instance, it must be emphasized, the observance was a matter of individual concern. There was no religious organization, no theocracy, no priestly class, no dogma. Every man could be his own priest and his own prophet—the individual interpreter of the wills and ways of the spirits. A direct revelation without priestly go-between was the panacea for human ills and aspirations, the one secure basis of earthly goods.

Every Comanche consumed with ambition set forth in quest of a vision from which power (*puha*) was to be derived. His power, or medicine as it is generally called, came in a mystic visitation, a dream phenomenon or hallucinatory experience; the Comanches did not confuse an ordinary dream with a revelation. Visions came only when sought and under certain stringent conditions. Dreams were interesting experiences, and hardly more. Bad dreams did not portend bad luck unless the dreamer revealed them within four days.

The vision was fundamental in the guardian spirit complex. Certainly it was to the Indian an unquestionable means of obtaining power. Its authority was absolute. Psychic experiences were socially recognized and regarded as the very cornerstone of cultural life. The

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

VIII

Cosmogony and Folk Beliefs

NO subject is more difficult to treat than one which deals with the beliefs of a people concerning abstract matters. It is not easy to learn from intimate associates their inmost religious ideas; it is obviously much more difficult to determine the beliefs of an alien race speaking an unfamiliar tongue and having a wholly different inheritance, training, and point of view.

The Comanches have often been designated as the skeptics or unbelievers of the plains. This conclusion has been based largely upon the fact that they had comparatively few well-established visible and externalized customs of religious meaning such as were found among other Plains Indians. Since their religion was largely individualistic, there was, as there is among our own people, great diversity of faith and feeling. They had no dogma and no professional priestly class to formulate a systematic religion.

It was not in the nature of the Comanche to be introspective. Nor was it in his nature reflectively to state his motives or ways of acting in formulae. The Comanche was oriented to see things as isolated episodes, not as a patterned unfolding of a great scheme.

We have already seen that the Comanche took the spirit beings with whom he had formal contact pretty much for granted. He hardly bothered at all to concern himself with the nature of the universe beyond them. It is to be expected, consequently, that the vague

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

and scanty information that is available will reveal divergent and conflicting opinions concerning the supernatural.

Comanche religion was exceedingly simple, highly vital, and based on no more than casual attempts to explain satisfactorily the mysterious operations of nature by which he was confronted every day.

After burial, according to the somewhat fanciful account of an adopted Comanche, the spirit of the departed warrior mounted the spirit of his slain pony, his ghostly quiver of bow and arrows at his back, the spectre of his lance in his hand, the shadow of his shield on his arm—to gallop skyward, followed by his phantom herd loaded with ghostly possessions heaped by his relatives and friends in and about his grave. Straight into the sun and the pastures of the Happy Hunting Ground he sped, there to remain an extended time. But eventually, after an excursion in celestial pastures, the spirit of the departed must be reborn of the Earth Mother and return to keep up the population and power of the tribe.[1]

There is no doubt that the Comanches had an unwavering faith in a future existence. As to the nature of their after world, their accounts are fairly uniform. Their after world was generally conceded to be beyond the sun where it sets in the west. It was modeled after the imperfect reality of their everyday existence with all the disagreeable features absent, for all things there were perfect. It was a "valley ten thousand fold longer and wider" than their own valley (this specific reference was probably to the Arkansas), covered with groves, streams, and meadows. There was no rain or wind; the climate was always mild and the water cool. There the great chiefs of all the Comanches held their assemblies, and they and all the warriors were young. They followed the chase, but the war whoop never penetrated those sacred realms. There was no darkness there, for the Great Spirit was everywhere. In this heavenly valley there would always be plenty without the necessity of expending much energy or effort to obtain it. The "shade" of the Comanche could there experience to the fullest measure all the pleasures the material body had experienced or hoped for while on earth. There were buffalo, deer, elk, and antelope in abundance; pounded corn was forever at hand; and horses were fleeter than the wind. Beautiful birds warbled

[1] Hobbs, *op. cit.*, 33–34.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

776 the range of the mystically potent, but the individual consciousness ascribed power to a relatively narrow selections of beings, their identity being determined by chance experience.

To discuss Comanche religion in terms of a definite pantheon would therefore be preposterous. Comanche "gods" were not clear-cut beings with sharply defined cosmic or social functions. Divine power was not concentrated in a few major personalities, but diffused over the universe and likely to crop up in unexpected places. A Comanche did not first envisage a god and then worship him; he started with the thrill, with the sense of a supernatural agency, and objectified his emotional stirrings. There were, nevertheless, certain supernaturals that appeared rather frequently both in ritual and in visionary experiences, notably the eagle, the bear, and the buffalo.

771 Religion and ethics were largely divorced. The really vital social canons had no supernatural sanctions. When a vision-seeker called upon the supernaturals to favor him, he hardly ever stressed his moral worth, but his desire for aid. What he pleaded for was not moral elevation, but some material benefit; and it was compassion that animated his patron in granting it. Often, to be sure, the visitant laid down rules of conduct, but they had no bearing on social considerations. Good intentions were no safeguard against the consequences of transgression. A man who unwittingly broke rules imposed upon him had to bear the brunt of the catastrophe, for ignorance of the "law" was no safeguard against punishment.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

threads of the people together, but now a youthful warrior was about to accomplish that."[11]

The Sun Dance, as it was worked out for the occasion by the Comanches, was a much simplified version of the elaborate complex that existed among the Cheyennes, Arapahos, and Kiowas. The Comanches had been interested spectators of Kiowa Sun Dances for some seventy-five years, and they had from time to time watched the Cheyenne spectacle in the years following the making of the peace in 1840. They were familiar enough with the external forms of the dance.

Certain features of the social structure that supported the Cheyenne and Kiowa dances were lacking in the cultural equipment of the Comanches, but this did not bother them. They were always a highly adaptable people and not in the least form-bound. If they had no military societies to police the camp and the dance, as did their neighbors, that was quite all right with them. They did not use police on the buffalo hunt—and they could do without them here. The fact that a little fetish doll was essential to the Kiowas in their form of the dance did not worry the Comanches, who had no such doll. They made no effort to procure a Sun Dance doll; they simply did without one. That the Cheyennes possessed trained Sun Dance priests, each of whom owned an inherited Sun Dance Medicine Bundle, without which no man could direct a Sun Dance, was of no moment. A respected shaman could direct the ceremony.

What was wanted was the Sun Dance—an invocation of the Great Power. The will and the general form of the dance would achieve the goal. Comanche thinking was running in the Comanche way.

The Comanche Sun Dance lodge had the traditional forked center pole surrounded by a circular wall of twelve upright posts, from each of which a streamer ran to the crotch of the center pole. The wall, with an opening between the two easternmost poles, was filled in with brush. Four ceremonial days were used to gather the materials and prepare the lodge.

The common Plains Indian practice of treating the tree that was to yield the center pole as though it were an enemy—i.e., "scouting" for it and counting coup upon it—was not done by the Comanches. They did, however, choose an honored, virtuous woman to do the

[11] Richardson, *The Comanche Barrier to South Plains Settlement*, 374.

7: Richardson D-4 (no date) 1929
NO6 Comanche NO6

411 steel, about two feet and a half long and an inch wide, tapering to a point, fixed into a slender handle of bois d'arc, the whole weapon being about seven feet in length.

714 411 The Comanche shields were described as being circular in form, about two feet in diameter, and made of wicker work covered with two thicknesses of Buffalo hide. Between the coverings of buffalo hide was a padding of hair about an inch thick. With the advent of the rifle the Indians probably reinforced their shields. At any rate the tough buffalo hide covering, turned flesh side out and polished as much as possible, would turn a rifle ball unless it struck it perpendicular to the surface.

411 Long after they had become acquainted with metal implements the Comanches continued to use a war club made by binding a withe around a hard stone of about two pounds in weight. A groove around the stone helped to keep it in place. The handle was about fourteen inches long. No doubt the Indians often put this stone to various uses such as driving stakes.

771 776 Very little is known about the religion of the wild Comanches. Their religious conceptions were evidently vague and they had comparatively few well established customs of religious meaning. One observer credits them with acknowledging a supreme ruler and director, whom they called the great spirit, and with worshipping the sun as the great cause of life and the earth as the receptacle and producer of all that sustains life.[23] It may well be doubted that they had any conception of a single "Great Spirit," but their veneration for the sun and earth can not be doubted. When game was brought down on a hunt the carcass was immediately prepared and cooked, but no matter how hungry the Indian might be, not a [782] bite was eaten until the chief or leader had cut off a morsel and buried it. Similarly when the chief lit his pipe the first puff of smoke was blown toward the sun and the second to the earth.[24]

784 Naturally these savages had many taboos. One or two of these may be mentioned as illustrative, for they were sometimes matters of great consequence. In 1787, the Spanish in New Mexico tried a colonization experiment with the Comanches and spent a consider-

23. Parker, Notes Taken with Marcy, 231.
24. See Noah Smithwick, The Evolution of a State, 180. Ceremonies preceding the meal similar to this were common among the plains tribes. See Hodge, I, 455.

10:Horn T-3 (1836-1837) 1955
NO6 Comanche NO6

them to, with a kind of stoic indifference. But they are not slow to profit by the labor of others beside themselves, whenever an opportunity offers; and it is truly astonishing to witness the pains and labor they will go through to obtain one; and when they have marked their victim, it would seem that nothing short of an interposing miracle of mercy could save him. They literally live by slaying and murdering all of man and beast that come in their way. There are [55] exceptions in the case of the traders who go among them, and who have learned to anticipate their wants, and to supply them; but woe to the unwary trader that offends them! He seldom, if ever, fails to pay the forfeit with his life. They are trained, from infancy to age, to deeds of cruelty and bloodshed, and are as wholly wreckless of human rights, out of their own circle, as though they held in their own hands the destinies of the universe; and they appear to be alike insensible of obligation to any being in heaven or on earth. I could not, from all the observation of which I was capable, discover that they had any idea of a Supreme Being; nor could I learn that they paid their devotion to any kind of being, unless something of the kind might be obscurely inferred from the following circumstance: In a storm, with thunder and lightning, I have frequently seen them go out and throw dirt into the air, and utter unintelligible sounds; but whether it was designed to express their resentment to, or

conciliate the favor of, the Author of the war of elements, I could not determine. Another circumstance induced me to think they might have some notions of a future state. There was a young woman among them, who certainly possessed some traits of character more amiable by far than the most of her race with whom I was acquainted; she sickened and died, when their grief, as usual, was unbounded. I observed to one of the females, that I hoped she was better off than when here; – she smiled, and pointed upwards. The strength of their attachment to each other, and the demonstration they give of the same, even to the dividing of the last morsel with each other upon the point of starvation, might put many professed christians to the blush! But they are just the reverse of all this to all the world beside. They think themselves the cleverest race of men on earth, and treat all others as infinitely inferior to themselves. They have no formal marriages among them. They generally take wives at an early age. Each man is allowed to take five women; but, in making his selection, the ties of consanguinity oppose no barrier; hence they are truly a consanguineous race of so motley a mixture, that it would be impossible to identify the connexions. The distinction, however, [50] might be less obscure, but for the fact, that with them matrimonial alliances oppose no restraint to promiscuous intercourse. The relation of the women to the men differs little from a state of the

21: Burnet T-5 (1818-1819) 1954 NO6 Comanche NO6
Texas

[ca. 1818] 000

auxiliary to an otherwise impotent authority. The pains 175
and penalties of their criminal laws, are confined almost 562
exclusively to the weaker sex. The incontinence of a wife, 175
is punished by cutting off her nose. This odious abscission 684
is made from the junction of the cartilage and bond, ob-
liquely down to the lip. Several instances of this shocking
penal infliction are now extant. But the sentence of muti- 175
lation is sometimes remitted in consequence of the interpo- 696
sition of male connections. The decisions of the law always
yield to a determined resistance.

If one man wantonly kills another, the nearest friend 175
of the deceased, is permitted, and indeed it devolves upon 627
him as a duty, to revenge his death, by taking the life of 682
the murderer. But the price of blood, may be commuted
for articles of more value and convenience than blood, and
murder may be atoned for, and the spirit of revenge ap-
peased by liberal donations to the living relatives of the
deceased. Such atrocities however, seldom occur. Notwith- 175
standing the extreme laxity of their whole economy of gov- 571
ernment, and their entire exemption from legal restraint,
they live together with a degree of harmony that would do
credit to the most refined and best organized societies. The 175
little bickerings and jealousies and inordinate strivings for 578
thrift and distinction, that disquiet and mar the social circles
of refinement, are unknown to the rude and simple children
of nature.

The Comanchee system of religion is about as perfect 175
and luminous as that of their jurisprudence. They believe 771
in a Supreme Being, and in a future state of existence, but
have adopted no mode or manner of worship. Indeed they 175
consider the Supreme Being, to be so far removed from them 771
as not to wish to interfere directly, in their temporal con- 776
cerns, and as equally unwilling to be interfered with. They [775]
therefore leave him to enjoy his repose without molestation,
and expect the same indulgence for themselves. They have
no idea of a special superintending Providence, or that the
Great Spirit takes any particular cognizance of the actions
of men. And they consequently defer all their devotional 175
concerns, if indeed they entertain any, to a dark futurity, 771

21: Burnet T-5 (1818-1819) 1951 NO6 Comanche NO6
Texas

[ca. 1818]

175 which has never been shadowed to their minds, except by
771 the faint and flickering light of nature. The beams of divine revelation have never penetrated the dismal mists that constitute their moral atmosphere. They nevertheless be-
175 lieve in a final accountability, in which they plainly, but
771 perhaps unconsciously, indicate a sentiment of the omnis-
775 cience and ubiquity of the Great Judge of Heaven and Earth. By an obvious and natural impulse of unenlightened reason, which is most apt to prefigure the joys and sorrows of a future state, by the experience of the past and present, they suppose that when a good man dies, he goes to a fertile and salubrious country where the Buffaloes, which furnish their principal and favorite aliment, and every desirable species of game are abundant, and where they will enjoy the charms of the chase, with a more exquisite zest, without interruption and without satiety. The reverse of this destiny is assigned to the wicked, who they imagine will be driven away, to linger out a miserable existence, among rugged and sterile hills that are infested with all manner of noxious animals, and where the Buffaloes, Deer and Bears are scarce, and
175 meagre and unsavory to the palate. Goodness, however, in
577 their system of ethics, is a qualified term that has reference to acts of public benefit and renown, such as taking of scalps, expert and successful hunting, and dexterity in stealing from their enemies, rather than to the gentler virtues, that adorn and humanize and purify the heart.

175 They believe in polytheism and in both good and evil
771 spirits of either sex, but claim supremacy to the one Great
776 Being, whom they represent as a Big Man, that can never die, and who is the peculiar original parent of the Co-
[186] manchee race. The origin of other nations they assign to other subordinate Deities, and as their father is the Greatest God in Heaven, so they think themselves the greatest nation
175 on earth. They attribute an inferior modicum of divinity
771 to the sun, and suppose all febrile diseases to emanate from
[821] the displeasure of that magnificent candle of nature. They
753 have no order of priesthood, but are not altogether exempt
[793] from the juggles of priestcraft. They have no symbols of true faith, neither do they know any distinction of days or
[796] seasons.

21: Burnet T-5 (1818-1819) 1954 NO6 Comanche NO6
Texas

(ca. 1818)

seasons. In short they have no visible, operative religion; and such notions as they do entertain, are mere fanciful speculations, that apparently have not the slightest practical influence on their lives and conduct. They are enveloped in thick darkness, and live, and die in dismal estrangement from the God of Heaven. 175 771

B.

[*The Cincinnati Literary Gazette*, May 22, 1824]

Letter III

The Comanchees, like all other heathen nations, mingle with the crudities of their religious tenets, some exceedingly absurd and unintelligible fantasies, to which they adhere with all the tenacity of a blind superstition. They believe in witchcraft, and impute to persons whom they suspect to be possessed of the "evil spirit", the most mischievous and diabolical propensities. All internal diseases, the nature or cause of which they do not comprehend, and they are by no means skilled in physics, they attribute to the *blasting breath* of some secret enemy, who is endowed by evil genii with the mystical powers of enchantment. They say the unhappy subject has been "blown", and represent the manner of communicating the occult infection, by blowing through the hand. These tricks of sorcery they sometimes charge to the evil disposed of their own people, but are never able to detect and identify the foul fiend, or instant immolation would be his destiny. They hold the Kitchies (a small band on a branch of the River Trinity) in peculiar detestation, on account of their supposed powers of *blowing;* and charge them with having "blown" the waters that intersect their route to Natchitoches, which has rendered their visits to that post so destructive to their people. Whatever may be the nature of the hidden disease, the consequence is often a gradual dissolution of the miserable victim, who pines away in langour and despondency, amidst unavailing threats of vengeance upon his mysterious adversary. The few persons I have seen who were supposed to have been "blown", have exhibited all the external symptoms of pulmonary affection: but the mild and equable tem- 175 754

22: Dacus Q-3 (no date) 1960 N06 Comanche N06
(ca. 1870)

[ca. 1870]

he was carried into the white man's country and that they gave him to a great monster, with wings, that lived upon the mighty waters at the place where the sun rises, and it had flown away with him. This was a long time ago. 'Our people think white men bad medicine.'"

The Comanches believe in a Supreme Being, and in many minor deities —that is, in the manifestation of a supernatural power in the operations of nature. Their religious ideas, if such a term may be allowed, are of the vaguest character. They bury their dead, with great secrecy, and place in their graves weapons and food. They believe in the immortality of man, and picture a fair paradise beyond the boundary of time. They have few ceremonies of a religious character. For the dead, they offer prayers at the rise of the sun. With their faces turned toward the rising orb of day, over the graves of their departed friends, they set up a howl sufficient to strike terror to the heart of one unaccustomed to hear them. They are not a happy people. Like all aborigines, they are grave, taciturn and moody.

539 [829] 771 [776] 764 775 796 765 181

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Lyon's Kathairon

For Preserving and Beautifying the Human Hair, to Prevent Its Falling Out and Turning Gray.

A well preserved Head of Hair, in a person of middle age, at once bespeaks refinement, elegance, health and beauty. It may truly be called Woman's Crowning Glory, while men are Not insensible to its advantages and charms. Few things are more disgusting than thin, frizzly, harsh, untamed Hair, with head and coat covered with dandruff. Visit a barber and you feel and look like a new man. This is what LYON'S KATHAIRON will do all the time. The charm which lies in well placed Hair, Glossy Curls, Luxuriant Tresses, and a Clean Head, is noticeable and irresistible.

Missouri Republican, *November 8, 1872*

/page 39 continued/

get. In the days before the first World War there were many special peyote meetings from which the young men were barred. In these meetings power contests were held, almost as a form of sport. The miraculous was common place, miracles, healing and the forseeing of the future. But this strong power of peyote, like that found on the quest, has almost completely dissappeared. The power possessed by the older men had to be handed down, and the communal power of peyote depended upon strong faith. Not only has the continuity of the power broken down but the power of peyote which does not depend upon teaching has also weakened considerably. Moreover, the younger people do not take the religion very seriously. I have posed the question of whether the increasing concern with power and faith which comes with old age does not offset this trend considerably. My informants answers are instructive.

In the traditional Comanche culture the young men were concerned only with war power and only rarely with healing and wisdom. But they did not deny the validity of the power which naturally came to the aged. When an older man felt that a younger one was ready to learn his power that honour was almost invariably accepted. But in the period from 1900 through 1920 the young men were not only frustrated but were also con-/40/fronted with the White system which seemed more powerful. As a result they went through a period of not believing in the traditional forms of power. They refused to learn when the old men offered to teach and the old men often refused to teach before they died because they distrusted the ways of the younger generation. In spite of the fact that this generation changed as it reached middle age, and came to value the traditional culture and to believe in the old forms of power, the chain had been broken and there was no way to retrieve what had been broken and there was no way to retrieve what had been lost in youth. Many became more serious about Peyote but this was never enough to regain the power and faith of the past.

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Peyote lost its power at the same time and in much the same way. The old men believed in Peyote exclusively. The younger generation could always go to a hospital or a doctor. This watering down of faith by having alternative choices plus that period of disbelief has been enough to change Peyote considerably.

If there has been a considerable change in the nature of Peyote itself then one must ask questions concerning its present functions as compared with those of the past. Traditionally Peyote has been considered as performing two major functions, one is to continue traditional values, the other to make communal what was once individual and so to unite the members and thus enable them to cope with the threatening environment. Mooney saw the religion as regenerative, Slotkin believes it to be adaptive. Among the Comanches the picture seems to lie midway between the two with some evidence that major changes are in the offing.

The Comanche Peyotist has inherited his religion directly from its founders. It is not an import to him and he does not feel bound by what other tribes have devised in recent years, the ethical points are not emphasized by the Comanche. As a result the findings that I will have must differ to some extent from those of Slotkin who has worked primarily in the Midwest and almost exclusively with the national organization. In spite of these differences there is a remarkable agreement on major points.

The rapid growth of the religion between 1870 and 1920 both within the Comanche tribe as well as intertribally was, for individual Comanches, a regenerative experience. The fight for religious freedom, and the reinjection of values to a disintegrating group provided the strength for many men, now middle aged, to surmount the difficulties of their lives and to achieve a modicum of financial stability and success. It served to make Peyotists proud of their heritage and to

/page 40 continued/

795 give them a base of operations from which they were able to partake
771 constructively in tribal politics. I cannot determine as yet just
177 how long this period lasted. The personality of Quanah Parker and his successes in dealing with the Whites were an added inspiration to Peyotists. But the period does not seem to have lasted very long. The adaptive qualities certainly seem to have gained the upper hand in a fairly short time. But there appears to be two sorts of adaptation at work; one is that inward turned attitude of the Comanches in the local groups, the other is the more White or outward oriented attitude of the Comanches in the national organization.

/41/According to the Peyotists in the local organizations, all
795 those traits which are Christian in appearance are merely used for
771 protective coloring. The cross, Christ, the organization into a
177 church, the use of Peyote as a sacrament etc. and so forth, either have been designed purely to put Peyote on a fighting basis legally or have very definite Peyote counterparts to the better known Christian
795 ones. Moreover, the ethical principles, with one major exception, are
771 only Christian in wording and are not felt to be at all identical by
177 Peyotists. Essentially the ethics and values of Peyote stem directly
599 from the traditional culture in the minds of the Peyotists. The ethic of brotherly love and non-violence is the exception to this, but it is not a borrowed Christianism so much as a necessary element in a situation which demanded the unity of an oppressed people and the impossibility of using agression. It is important to note that the call to brotherly love does not really extend to the White man except in a very abstract sense. There is no ethic in Peyote which is inconsistent with the traditional values and no symbolism which does not derive from traditional symbols. The dichotomy between Christianity is a proof to this more than the antagonisms between the two faiths could ever be.

/page 43 continued/

C K 829 179 Indians, both Christians and Peyotists believe themselves superior to the Whites. Their meek and agreeable role is a mask which is dropped the moment the Whites are out of sight. They take satisfaction in the success of their deception, in the gullibility of the Whites. They manipulate the Whites and further prove their superiority. But this is probably not enough to supply adequate satisfaction, there is a future date at which the tables will be turned. It is in this realm that both Christianity and Peyote perform an almost identical function.

C K [829] Because aggression is denied to both Christians and Peyotists alike, the non-aggression principles of the two faiths may be followed and the Indians feel that they are true to their faith while the White man is not. This will of course alleviate any guilt feelings due to suppressed aggression. But if the White man sins and the Indian does not then there is justice for the Christian in heaven and for both faiths, justice in the judgement day. The Peyotists' judgement day may be one trait taken bodily from Christian doctrine in tact. The descriptions I have had given me by Peyotists bode no good for Whites, and toned down as they are for my ears, the tone of voice is just a little unnerving. Moreover, Peyotists take every opportunity to mention this coming of the end to me in ominous tones and say that they are sure I get the point. Peyote symbolism has clothed the judgement day in Peyote clothes. During a normal ceremony the eagle bone whistle is blown within the tipi towards the east (passing out through the entrance). At the day of judgement the procedure will be reversed. The whistle (like Gabriel's horn I am told) will blow outside the tipi from the east toward the west. It will pass through the tipi passing out the rear of the tipi. The description of the strength and tone of that whistle is quite eerie. I have not been able to get many statements on the subject from Christians but only hints here and there.

C K 795 771 C K [129] C K 778 795 533 829

30: Levy E-5 (ca. 1957) 1958 NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma
Kiowa NQ15

/page 43 continued/

C K 795 771 [179] [123] In short, both religions seem to function in a similar manner in alleviating the pressures of the persecuted group. As far as I am able to determine the inroads made by the Whites and the constant pressures upon the Indians color if they do not determine most areas of an individual's life. But it is just in this field that I am ill-equipped to operate due to my own color.

C K 121 Returning now to the theoretical considerations mentioned at the outset, I think it is safe to say that they have been helpful in providing a means or point of view for examining the data. The result has been that the basic tensions of assimilationist versus traditionalist do not seem to be the major elements in the development of the areas of life examined so far. In so far as this split was once important it might be profitable to do some historical work concerning the changes that have been consummated during the past fifty years.

C K 121 665 197 /44/In satisfying Malinowskian criteria necessary for determining the changing functions of traits and trait complexes it is clear that much more must be known about the White culture of the area. It is not clear that this is a feasible task. The major lines of White aggression via government agencies and policies are not inaccessible. But the everyday pressures are perhaps as important and these stem from a fundamentalist Christian community which is totally foreign to me.

At present the most valuable tack would seem to be a view which would examine present phenomena as reactions to White pressures but which are consistant with the older form of Comanche culture. Historical periods may then be examined separately. Just what sort of model will prove sufficient I cannot tell at this time.

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

man, if he was fortunate, could become a peace chief, but a peace chief possessed no real authority and functioned most importantly as a mediator in the disputes which arose among the younger men.

With the greater food supply offered by the seemingly boundless bison herds, hunting magic decreased in importance. Antelope magic did persist from the Shoshone heritage. The more favorable living conditions and constant food supply also allowed the individual bands, which had retained their Basin characteristics, to become larger and to achieve a greater degree of independence from their sister bands. The emphasis on the buffalo as a food source also tended to decrease the importance of gathering and exploitation of the floral environment for food. Further, the Comanches made little or no use of fish and of such small game as rabbits (Lowie 1954:6).

The Basin Shoshone practice of infanticide disappeared as the family group could more efficiently care for its offspring. The practice of enculturating slaves and captives became common among the Comanches in order to augment their numbers and specifically to free males for hunting and warfare. The stress on war and hunting also tended to debase the position of women, and such practices as the mutilation of wives, a custom which had never occurred in Basin Shoshone culture, came into practice.

Patterns of religious belief and behavior also underwent certain changes from Basin life to the Plains. A vaguely defined belief in a Great Spirit persisted, as did the relative lack of concern with the afterlife. However, the intense fear of ghosts held by the Basin Shoshone diminished in the Comanche Plains culture. Also, the practice of power transmission from individual to individual, instead of power source to individual, developed in importance. The decrease in ghost fear and, it is assumed, witchcraft in Comanche culture, as opposed to the Basin culture, was greatly facilitated by the lessening of intrasocial tensions and the Comanches' ability, through warfare, to turn aggressions outward and away from the primary group. As a whole, Comanche religious patterns were exceedingly simple and lacking in elaborate ceremonialism and ritual, at least compared to their Plains neighbors (Hoebel 1940:83).

The Comanches possessed characteristics, other than their paucity of ceremonialism, which served to differentiate them from other Plains tribes. The Comanche bands were more self-managing than bands found among other Plains groups. Warrior societies, a diagnostic trait of Plains culture, were lacking in Comanche society except in the most rudimentary form. The Sun Dance was not a vital aspect of Comanche culture. Decoration of clothing with beads, quills, and ornaments of bone, shell, and metal was deemphasized, while heavy fringing of the garments was the rule. The Comanche tepee was built on a four-pole base like that of the Blackfoot, Sarsi, Ute, and Shoshone; while the Comanches' historic neighbors, such as the Kiowa, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Kiowa-Apache used a three-pole foundation (Lowie 1954:33).

By the early nineteenth century the bison herds were greatly diminished on the south Plains, and the Comanches increasingly turned to raiding to augment their economy. During this period the Comanches raided New Mexico, the Santa Fe Trail, northern Texas, and Old Mexico, sometimes as far south as Durango.

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 N06 Comanche N06
Oklahoma

115 159 603 855 [765] people like now. I remember that when I was small I watched long bunch of white peoples come in here and up to today that's almost all there is around here. In them days, no fences and no white people. And my grandmother knew that before it happened. She know lot of things like that too. And when what she says happens I was sure surprised, but it made me believe her better. She had a big hunk out of her ear. She cut her ear up when her brother died in the war . . . to show how sorry she was, but I didn't know that and I would joke her and tell her, "What's the matter with your ear? Did a mule bite it off?" She would tell me what happened to it. I would ask her all sorts of things and she would always tell me something on it. She's the one who told me to take my mother's doctoring-way when I was getting older. I didn't want it because I thought it was silly or nasty, but my grandmother said that soon in the future there wouldn't be hardly any Indian doctors left and she sure was right on that. I really cried when she pass on, because she had been so good to me, bringing me along like she did. So now, up to today, my daughters got kids and my son. I try to be like my grandma. I tell them old ways that I can remember, but, you know, they don't hardly care for it. They getting to be more like white peoples every year that pass. My grandmother told me all this would happen too.

115 159 604 756 755 Sanapia's maternal uncle, an eagle doctor like her mother, was very active among peyotists in southern Oklahoma. Her first recollections of peyote meetings were those which were directed by her uncle, and it was through him that Sanapia later learned the manifold uses of peyote as a medicine. Her mother also utilized peyote as a medicine, though not to the extent to which her uncle employed it. Sanapia's paternal grandfather was also a "strong peyote man." Thus early in life Sanapia was impressed with the importance of peyote by two very influential family members.

Religious Influences

115 159 771 Sanapia was reared in an atmosphere colored by three basic approaches to supernaturalistic realms—the Christianity of her father, the peyotism of her uncle and paternal grandfather, and the more customary Plains pattern of vision quests and guardian spirits as embodied by her mother, the eagle doctor. Through this liberal education she learned the basic tenets of each and managed to syncretically combine elements of all three into the validating and supportive unity by which she now lives and finds the rationalization for her own supernatural prerogative as a Medicine woman.

She quite naturally deemphasizes the differences and emphasizes the similarities in these three supernaturalistic systems. She is very fond of making comments like the following:

115 159 771 755 You know, the bible says that when Jesus was on earth he would heal people. His disciples had that same power as Him, and I know I'm just like them. I got power in my hands to heal peoples too. You can read the bible to find out that Jesus gives those people power to help people that got sickness, and it's just like that with me. When I pray, I feel just like, well, the Lord says, "You go heal that person. I give you power to do that and give you a good mind . . . put power in your hands. When you touch anybody like that, you'll get them well." That's what I always thought, you know. Use the bible like that.

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

She speaks similarly of peyote:

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That peyote is a real good medicine. They call it . . . some of the Indians call it a sacrament like white peoples who are Christians. God gave that peyote to the Indians to help them when they got sickness. I learned how to use that peyote a lot of ways. You ain't supposed to take it and think you go crazy. No! It's a medicine and that's the way I use it. Peyote gives me power to make people well.

When speaking of her supernatural patron, the eagle, she says:

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The eagle got more power then anything living, I guess. Its got Medicine to help people get well . . . to cure them. I got power like that eagle because the eagle help me when I call on it when I doctor. My mother told me that I be just like that eagle when I doctor. I can feel the eagle working in me when I doctor and try hard to get somebody well. Feels like that eagle tell me in my mind to go ahead and fix that person up . . . get him well.

However, though she utilizes elements of peyotism and Christianity, she has little sympathy for the organized forms of these religions. This is especially true with regard to Christianity.

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The way I know is, when I went to Christian church up there, many, many years back I found out some things. Like when you get hard up, or when you get sick in the family, they ain't going to help you. They don't come. They don't say, "Let's have a prayer meeting for you. Let's do that." They don't say that to you. They really tight. They don't spare nothing with you. I still pray like that, but I'm not going to their church for nothing.

She speaks of the Native American Church:

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They say I supposed to sign my name to belong to that Native Church. I told them that I wasn't going to do that. I been using that medicine for long as I know it, and my mother before me, and her father before her and way, way back like that. I don't have to belong to nothing to use that medicine. We hold meetings here on our place but I ain't going nowhere else around here to peyote meeting. That medicine belong to anybody that needs it and you don't have to belong to the church that they set up if you want to use it.

White Contact

Sanapia's first extensive contact with white society came when she began her schooling at the age of seven at Cache Creek Mission School in southern Oklahoma. She remembers the seven years she spent at Cache Creek as generally pleasant.

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I really did enjoy that school. I like it. The teachers . . . every one of them and our superintendent were all missionaries. They were really nice people. They teach us the bible. All the girls and boys go up there and they teach us all these bible stories and they question us out of the bible to see if we really read it.

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

and in her most difficult doctoring situations and in all her most critical moments, it is to the spirits of her teachers that she turns for aid. 115 159 756 787 755

The Supernatural Universe

Sanapia's description of the supernatural universe is full of contradictory elements. This is not as great an obstacle to action as it may seem since she addresses each element individually as the situation demands. She has no need to attempt to grasp the entirety of this universe at once. Sanapia is able to select from her potpourri of supernaturalistic notions the ones which best suit a particular occasion. 115 159 756 775

She believes that living human beings share the earth with the ghosts, or malevolent spirits of deceased humans who, alive, led evil lives. The ghosts can enter into the world of men, but men cannot enter the world of ghosts except through death. Also, somewhere, neither in the plane of living man nor in the plane of ghost existence, is the realm of pure, unembodied supernatural power. Such entities as the sun, the earth, and the eagle are able to tap this power and thus possess it to a greater extent than can mortal men. Power can be acquired by men only through secondhand channels and never from its source. A mortal would be killed if exposed to pure power. The power, from its original source, is inexhaustible. 115 159 756 778

In yet another plane of existence are found the spirits of good men such as the disciples of Jesus and the spirits of Sanapia's mother and uncle. This realm is not quite like heaven, which is the abode of God and Jesus and the eternal home of those ordinary souls who have nothing to offer the world of the living, as do the spirits of Medicine men or the disciples of Jesus. Hell is somewhere deep in the earth. Sanapia believes that it is the special eternal home of evil white men. Her notions of the nature of hell follow the standard Christian concept. 115 159 756 775 [776] 772 [777]

Peyote is similar to the sun or the eagle in its ability to embody an extraordinary degree of supernatural power. However, unlike the sun or the eagle, peyote comes from the Christian God as a sign of his love for all Indian people. According to Sanapia, the sun has existed longer then the Christian God, and is therefore entirely self-sufficient. 115 159 756 755 778 776

Thus Sanapia can become more or less Christian, peyotist, or Plains shaman as varying situations present themselves. By not assigning a negative value to contradictory elements in her supernaturalistic universe and by oversimplifying the similarities, Sanapia possesses a flexibility which confounds any attempt to present a very cogent description of her "religion." If a key pervasive theme had to be chosen, it probably would be concerned with the idea of supernatural power and the desirability of its acquisition and control. 115 159 766 771 [778]

A Successor

At the present time Sanapia is beginning to consider the problem of a successor, for she feels that her doctoring career is rapidly approaching its final 115 159 756 593

Element	Occurrence														
	H T	K A	Ka	Com	Ka	Ab 6	Da 1	Da 8	Wa	Ka C	Cr 1	Cr 2	WR8	Da
239. Feast follows meeting	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
240. Aligned between leader and door starting at west: Bible		−	−	−	−	•−	−	−	+	−	−	−	−	−	
241. Staff, rattle, and feathers	+	+	+	+		+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	
242. Whistle	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	−	−	+	+	+	+	+	
243. "Chief peyote"	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
244. Crescent of earth	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	
245. Crescent of ash	+	+	+	+	+	−	+			+	+	+	+	+	
246. Fire	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
247. Fire stick	+	+	+	+	+	+			−	+	+	+	+	+	
248. Water	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	−	+	+	+	+	+	
249. Person blessing water	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		−	+	+	+	+	+	
250. Peyote breakfast	+	+	•+	+	+	+	+	−	−	+	+	+	+	+	
251. Beliefs connected with peyotism: belief in a Great God (Great Spirit)	+		+	−	+	+	+	+	•+	+	+	+	•+	+	
252. Belief in spirit forces subservient to the Great God	+		+		(−)	+	+	+	+				+	+	•
253. Peyote is a spirit force chosen to guide the Indians	+	+	+	+	+	•+	+	+		+		+	+	+	
254. Peyote's function is medicinal	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	•+	+	+	+	+	+	
255. Peyote's function is particularly ethical-religious	+	+	•+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	(
256. Peyote's doctrines can be understood only through peyote intoxication	+	+	+	+	+	(+)	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	
257. Ultimate goal of intoxication is enlightenment and physical betterment	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	
258. Individual can be helped by concerted prayer	+	+	+	−	+	+	+	+	+	−		+	+	+	
259. Individual must attain purity before approaching spirit forces	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+		+		+	
260. An important function of peyote meeting is to purify	+	+	+	+	(+)	•+	+	+	+	+		+		+	
261. Modifications permitted by new revelations	+		+				−	+					−	+	
262. Approach to spirit forces should be humble	+	+	•+	+	+	•+	+	+	+	+			+	+	
263. Concept of the Peyote road as ethical-religious	+	+	•+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+			+	+	
264. Identification of the Peyote road with the Creator's road		+	•+	−		−	+	+		+			+	+	
265. Identification of the Peyote road with Jesus' road		+	•+	+	•+	−	−	+	+	−			+	+	•
265a. (See note)															

14: Stewart E-5 (1936-1938)1944 NR 13 Northern Paiute

Comanche N06 ●
Winnebago NP12